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No Objection to Declassification in Full 2013/01/04 : LOC-HAK-546-14-19-0

73-HK-AB15393

NSA, OSD reviews
completed

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

O 271415Z SEP 72
FM THE SITUATION ROOM
TO WINSTON LORD FOR MR. KISSINGER
ZEM
TOP SECRET SENSITIVE CONTAINS CODEWORD WH29497

TOHAK 31

State Dept. review completed

ACFT: HOLD FOR ARRIVAL OF PARTY

SEPTEMBER 27, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN VIETNAM

THE AIRBORNE DIVISION IS RUNNING INTO INTENSE ENEMY ARTILLERY AND MORTAR FIRE IN ITS ATTACK TOWARD THE THACH HAN RIVER. SOME 1,500 ROUNDS HIT AIRBORNE ELEMENTS YESTERDAY BUT ONLY LIGHT CASUALTIES WERE INFLICTED.

IN THUA THIEN PROVINCE, ENEMY SAPPERS TEMPORARILY INTERRUPTED TRAFFIC ALONG ROUTE 7 JUST NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS YESTERDAY. THE HIGHWAY WAS REOPENED IN THE AFTERNOON.

SOUTHWEST OF HUE, THE ARVN 1ST DIVISION MADE GOOD PROGRESS TOWARD EXPANDING CONTROL OVER ROUTE 547. THE 1ST DIVISION PLANS TO CONTINUE TO CONTROL UPPER GORMAN'S ROAD.

IN QUANG TIN PROVINCE, ENEMY INDIRECT FIRE IS HARASSING ARVN 2ND DIVISION ELEMENTS IN THE TIEN PHOUC AREA AND ALONG ROUTE 1.

THE QUANG NGAI SITUATION CONTINUES TO IMPROVE. THE 2ND RANGER GROUP HAS DEPLOYED TO DUC PHO AND HAS BEGUN TO CLEAR ROUTE 1 TO THE NORTH. THE ENEMY PRESSURE AGAINST MO DUC HAS DECREASED ALTHOUGH ROUTE 1 BETWEEN MO DUC AND THE SONG VE RIVER IS STILL INTERDICTIONED.

ATTENTION OF THE TWO RANGER BATTALIONS YESTERDAY AND RE-SUPPLY OPERATIONS HAVE IMPROVED THE ARVN SITUATION THERE.

IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF MILITARY REGION 2 YESTERDAY SEVERAL SMALL ACTIONS WERE REPORTED. ONE ARVN UNIT IN PLEIKU PROVINCE WAS IN SPORADIC CONTACT EAST OF THANH L.

IN MOST OF THE DAY WITH LIGHT CASUALTIES REPORTED ON BOTH SIDES GROUND CONTACTS WERE ALSO REPORTED NEAR DUC CO AND PLEI D'JERENG.

THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE SITUATION IN MILITARY REGION 3 AND ENEMY ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO BE LIGHT IN MILITARY REGION 4.

MORI/CDP
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ON SEPTEMBER 27, A TOTAL OF 635 TACTICAL AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN, 392 OF WHICH HIT TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM. IN ADDITION, THREE B-52 SORTIES WERE FLOWN OVER NORTH VIETNAM. FORTY B-524 HIT TARGETS IN CAMBODIA AND TWELVE FLEW MISSIONS OVER LAOS.

MILITARY REGION 1

A TOTAL OF 1,500 ROUNDS OF MORTAR AND ARTILLERY HIT AIRBORNE UNITS AS THEY PRESSED THEIR ATTACK TOWARD THE THACH HAN RIVER.

--THE AIRBORNE MADE LIMITED PROGRESS AGAINST INTENSE ENEMY FIRE AND STRONG ENEMY DEFENSES. THE ENEMY'S RESISTANCE IS EVIDENCE OF HIS CONCERN OVER THE ALLIED DRIVE INTO THE HAI LANG FOREST WHERE NVA FORCES REPORTEDLY ARE GROUPING FOR A COUNTEROFFENSIVE.

--THE MARINE DIVISION REPORTED A LOW LEVEL OF ACTIVITY WITH ONLY A SLIGHT INCREASE IN INDIRECT FIRE AND GROUND ATTACKS.

--IN THE HUE AREA, THE NVA 29TH REGIMENT, 324B DIVISION WILL PROBABLY RESIST ANY FURTHER PENETRATION INTO NVA REAR BASE AREAS BY THE ARVN 1ST DIVISION BUT THE 1ST DIVISION PLANS TO KEEP CONTROL OVER THE UPPER PORTION OF GORMAN'S ROAD, A KEY LOGISTICS ROUTE FOR ANY ENEMY ATTACK ON HUE.

--THE 1ST DIVISION HAS ALSO TAKEN THE CONTROLLING TERRAIN AROUND FIRE SUPPORT BASE VEGHEL.

--IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE, TERRITORIAL FORCES REPORTED SEVERAL SMALL ENGAGEMENTS AROUND FIRE SUPPORT BASE BALDY AND ONE CONTACT 13 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF DA NANG.

--IN QUANG TIN PROVINCE, ENEMY INDIRECT FIRE CONTINUES TO HARASS 2ND DIVISION ELEMENTS BUT NO MAJOR GROUND CONTACTS WERE REPORTED.

--AROUND MO DUC, LANDING ZONE DRAGON REMAINS IN ENEMY HANDS BUT GENERALLY THE SITUATION HAS IMPROVED. THE 2ND RANGER GROUP HAS ARRIVED AT DUC PHO AND THE RANGER CAMP AT BA TO HAS RECEIVED REINFORCEMENTS.

MILITARY REGION 2

THE PRIMARY ACTIVITY YESTERDAY WAS AROUND POPULATION CENTERS AND ALONG LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

END OF PAGE TWO

--IN PLEI No Objection to Declassification in Full 2013/01/04 : LOC-HAK-546-14-19-0
ADIC CONTACT EAST OF THANH AN MOST OF THE DAY WITH LIGHT CASUALTIES RE-
PORTED ON BOTH SIDES.

--GROUND CONTACTS NEAR DUC CO AND PLEI D'JERENG INDICATE AN ENEMY
INTENTION TO TIE DOWN ARVN FORCES IN DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.

MILITARY REGION 3

THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN SITUATION IN MILITARY REGION 3
YESTERDAY.

--ACTIVITY WAS LIGHT. ARVN FORCES CONDUCTED A SEARCH OPERATION NEAR
TAN UYEN IN BIEN HOA PROVINCE AND DISCOVERED A CACHE OF 150 PETARN
MINES, PROBABLY BELONGING TO THE K2 SAPPER BATTALION.

MILITARY REGION 4

ENEMY ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO BE LIGHT BUT THERE IS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT
THE ENEMY PLANS TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS TO EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN HIS
COMMUNICATI SON ROUTE FROM THE U MINH FOREST THROUGH PHONG DINH
PROVINCE.

US AIR AND NAVAL OPERATIONS

THE FOLLOWING AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN ON SEPTEMBER 27:

P	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	NVN	TOTAL
TACAIR US	163	14	38	36	392	635
TACAIR VNAF	46	41	62	56	8	213
B-52	27	9	6	0	3	97

IFORTY SORTIES WERE FLOWN AGAINST TARGETS IN CAMBODIA AND TWELVE IN
LAOS.

PRIMARY TARGETS NORTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL TODAY INCLUDE FIVE RAILROAD
BRIDGES AT LANG GIAI NORTHEAST OF HANOI, THE CAO DUONG RAILROAD BRIDGE,
THREE SAM SITES IN THE HANOI AREA, FIVE STORAGE SITIZES HANOI, THE
DONG DU HIGHWAY BRIDGE NORTHEAST OF HANOI, THREE MILITARY INSTALLTIONS
NEAR HANOI, THE VANH DAMK HIGHWAY AND RAILROAD BRIDGE NORTH OF
HAIPHONG, TWO OPEN STORAGE AREAS AND TWO POL STORAGE SITES NEAR HAIPHONG
AND TWO RAILROAD BRIDGES AND A SIDING AND A SPUR AT PHU LY.

END OF PAGE THREE

SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL, PRIMARY TARGETS ARE EIGHT BRIDGES IN THE
VINK AREA AND TWO TRUCK PARKS.

THE FOLLOWING TACTICAL AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN OVER NORTH VIETNAM
YESTERDAY:

RP-1	RP-2	RP-3	RP-4	RP-5	RP-6A	RP-6B	OFFSHORE	TOTAL
86	57	21	15	40	8	7	32	258

THERE WERE 94 SORTIES FLOWN NORTH OF THE 20 PARALLEL AND 164 SOUTH
OF THE 20TH

YESTERDAY, HOA AIRCRAFT STRUCK THREE PRIMARY TARGETS. WEST OF HANOI, THE BEN NGU MILITARY INSPECTION AND THE HOA BINH SUPPLY FACILITY WERE STRUCK. NUMEROUS SECONDARY FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS WERE OBSERVED AT THE SUPPLY FACILITY. RESULTS OF THE HOA BINH STRIKE WERE NOT OBSERVED DUE TO ADVERSE WEATHER. THE YEN BAI AIRFIELD NORTHWEST OF HANOI WAS BOMBED, AND ONE MIG-21 WAS DESTROYED AND ANOTHER WAS DAMAGED.

NAVY AIRCRAFT STRUCK THREE PRIMARY TARGETS. THE QUANG SUOI ARMY BARRACKS NORTH OF THANH HOA, THE XOM DUONG DAU HIGHWAY BRIDGE, AND THE LA KHE THON RAILROAD BYPASS NORTHWEST OF DONG HOI. RESULTS WERE NOT OBSERVED DUE TO POOR WEATHER. THE FOLLOWING SECONDARY TARGETS WERE HIT BY NAVY AIRCRAFT WITH THE RESULTS INDICATED:

THE DA CHONG STORAGE AREA: ONE SUSTAINED FIRE. CAM PHA EXPLOSIVES STORAGE AREA: ONE SECONDARY EXPLOSION. NAM DINH POL STORAGE AREA: FIVE SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS AND ONE SUSTAINED FIRE. THANH HOA HIGHWAY BYPASS BRIDGE: DESTROYED. DA DO HIGHWAY BRIDGE: DAMAGED. THE NGUU SON HIGHWAY BRIDGE NUMBER 21: DESTROYED.

USAF AND NAVY STRIKES AGAINST INTERDICTION POINTS, MILITARY FACILITIES, AND TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY DESTROYED OR DAMAGED 18 TRUCKS, SEVEN WATER CRAFT, NINE WAREHOUSES, ONE FERRY SHIP, TWO STACKS OF SUPPLIES, AND 112 BOXES OF SUPPLIES. IN ADDITION, FIVE ROADS WERE INTERDICTED, ONE FORD WAS CUT, AND 16 SECONDARY FIRES AND 29 SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS WERE OBSERVED. NINE TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE WERE FLOWN. THERE WERE NO ENEMY REACTIONS.

NAVAL SURFACE OPERATIONS

TWO CRUISERS AND SIX DESTROYERS CONDUCTED NAVAL GUNFIRE STRIKES ALONG THE COAST. TARGETS INCLUDED RAILROAD AND HIGHWAY BRIDGES, SUPPLY AND POL STORAGE AREAS, AND ARMY BARRACKS, AND A BOAT YARD. NO OFF-LOADING ACTIVITY BY THE CHINESE MERCHANT SHIP HUNG CHI 162 WAS OBSERVED AT THE NON LA ISLAND ANCHORAGE.

END OF PAGE FOUR

LBPLANS FOR MIG ATTACK ON B-52'S

INTERCEPTED COMMUNICATIONS INDICATE THAT PLANS ARE BEING MADE FOR MIG ATTACKS AGAINST B-52'S. HANOI AIR DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS ASKED THE SOUTHERN AIRFIELD AT BAI THUONG YESTERDAY WHICH OF ITS PILOTS WERE ON STANDBY "FOR THE MISSION." A SHORT TIME EARLIER, THE HEADQUARTERS HAD TOLD A SUBORDINATE THAT "TONIGHT WE HAVE A MISSION TO STRIKE A B-52." NO MIG AIRCRAFT ARE KNOWN TO BE DEPLOYED SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL, BUT HANOI HAS IN THE PAST BEEN ABLE TO DEPLOY FIGHTERS TO THE SOUTH UNDETECTED.

NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES LAUNCHED THEIR ANTICIPATED COUNTERATTACK ON SEPTEMBER 26 AGAINST THE IRREGULAR TASK FORCE WESTERN EDGE OF THE PLAIN

DES JARRES. INITIAL REPORTS INDICATE THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF THE TASK FORCE CAME UNDER HEAVY SHELLING AND GROUND ASSAULTS. THE IRREGULARS ABANDONED SEVERAL POSITIONS ON THE HIGH GROUND AT PHOU THEN, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRE SUPPORT BASE NET 6 - 883-439 IN IMMINENT DANGER OF FALLING AFTER BEING SUBJECTED TO HEAVY FIRE BY 130MM FIELD GUNS. OTHER TROOPS ARE APPARENTLY HOLDING THEIR GROUND AGAINST TANK-SUPPORTED GROUND ASSAULTS.

CAMBODIA

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GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE LAUNCHED A NEW OPERATION TO RETAKE A KEY HILL ABOUT SEVEN MILES EAST OF ITS MEKONG RIVER BASE AT NEAK LUONG. THE HILL, WHICH OVERLOOKS THE EASTERLY AND NORTHERN APPROACHES TO NEAK LUONG, WAS OCCUPIED BY ENEMY ON SEPTEMBER 12. PHNOM PENH HAS ASSIGNED TEN BATTALIONS TO THE OPERATION.

SOUTH OF PHNOM PENH, THE KHMER COMMUNIST CONTINUE TO HARASS GOVERNMENT POSITIONS ALONG A SECTION OF ROUTE 2. THREE GOVERNMENT BATTALIONS AND ARMORED PERSONNEL SQUADRON WERE DISPATCHED FROM PHNOM ON SEPTEMBER 26 TO REINFORCE SEVERAL UNITS FROM TRAM KHNAR AND TAKEO CITY THAT HAVE MADE NO HEADWAY IN THEIR EFFORTS TO REOPEN THE HIGHWAY.

POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC

STATUS OF PACIFICATION

ROUGHLY 13,394,900 PEOPLE OR 70.3 PERCENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S POPULATION RESIDES IN AREAS RATED AS OR WELL-SECURED BY THE GVN WHILE 2.1 PERCENT IS CONSIDERED AS LIVING IN ENEMY-CONTROLLED HAMLETS. ACCORDING TO THE HAMLET EVALUATION SURVEY, THE WELL-SECURED SOUTH VIETNAMESE

END OF PAGE FIVE

POPULATION DECLINED 2.3 PERCENT OVERALL IN AUGUST FROM THE JULY FIGURES.

WHILE ONLY SLIGHT DECREASE (0.6 TO 1.6 PERCENT) WERE REPORTED IN MILITARY REGIONS 2, 3, AND 4, HEAVY ENEMY ACTION IN SOUTHERN MILITARY REGION

1 CAUSED A DECREASE IN AN POPULATION OF 11 PERCENT. HOWEVER, THE ENEMY-CONTROLLED POPULATION ALSO DECREASED 0.3 PERCENT IN AUGUST BUT THE NUMBER OF HAMLETS OCCUPIED BY THE ENEMY INCREASED BY 60 TO 1,023.

IMPENDING CABINET RESHUFFLE IN CAMBODIA

CAMBODIAN PRESIDENT LON NOL HAS TOLD OUR CHARGE IN PHNOM PENH THAT HE WILL RESHUFFLE THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE OCTOBER 9 ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE REPUBLIC. ALTHOUGHT LON NOL IS UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM HIS CRITICS TO "BROADEN HIS BASE," THE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON WHETHER TO GO SO FAR AS TO FORM A "NEW GOVERNMENT" WITH A NEW PROGRAM AND MEMBERSHIP. THE PRESIDENT IS ~~PREOCCUPIED WITH REORGANIZING THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND APPARENTLY HAS NOT YET RENewed EARLIER EFFORTS~~ AT PERSUADING SOME OF HIS POLITICAL RIVALS TO JOIN HIS NEW CABINET.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION IN GVN COUNTRYSIDE

ACCORDING TO CORDS FIELD REPORTS FROM MILITARY REGION 4, THE RECENT ARVN RECAPTURE OF QUANG TRI CITY HAS BEEN A GREAT SYMBOLIC VICTORY IN THE EYES OF THE GENERAL POPULATION. MOST PEOPLE FEEL THAT SIGNIFICANT MILITARY BATTLES ENGAGED IN SO FAR SHOW THAT THE SOUTH VIET-

NAMESE, WITH US AIR POWER, CAN DEFEAT THE STRONGEST ENEMY FORCES. IN BOTH MILITARY REGIONS 3 AND 4 PRESIDENT THIEU'S RECENT ABOLITION OF HAMLET CHIEF ELECTIONS HAS RECEIVED LITTLE PUBLIC ATTENTION. WHILE THE DISPLACED OFFICIALS ARE GRUMBLING, THE MEASURE GENERALLY IS SEEN AS A MOVE TO FORCE INCOMPETENTS OUT OF OFFICE, EFFECT ECONOMY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TO STRENGTHEN THE GVN IN PREPARING FOR A CEASEFIRE.

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TRAVEL SCHEDULE OF RELEASED POW'S

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ACCORDING TO OUR LATEST INFORMATION THE THREE RELEASED POW'S ARE TO ARRIVE IN MOSCOW (FROM PEKING) WEDNESDAY AT 4:25 P.M. (9:35 A.M. EDT). OUR CHARGE AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICIALS WILL MEET THE PLANE AND INFORM THEM THAT A US MEDICAL EVACUATION FLIGHT HAS BEEN ARRANGED TO TRANSPORT THEIR GROUP FROM COPENHAGEN (WHERE THEY WILL GO FROM MOSCOW THURSDAY MORNING) TO THE US. IN THE MEANTIME, THE EMBASSY WILL OFFER THE RELEASED POW'S THEIR RELATIVES AND ANTI-WAR ESCORTS OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS IN EMBASSY FACILITIES. SHOULD THE OFFICERS CHOOSE TO RETURN TO THE US BY A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT FROM COPENHAGEN, A US DOCTOR AND EMBASSY OFFICER WILL ACCOMPANY THE GROUP FROM MOSCOW TO THE US. THE COMMERCIAL FLIGHT FROM COPENHAGEN WILL ARRIVE IN NEW YORK THURSDAY AT 7:00 P.M.

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